



Spain: Regional Autonomy and Political Stability

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A Research Paper

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**Spain:
Regional Autonomy
and Political Stability**

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 1 April 1983
was used in this report.*

The peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy in post-Franco Spain is without parallel in modern Europe. Equally remarkable has been the simultaneous transformation of Spain—once one of the most highly centralized countries in Europe—into a de facto federation of autonomous communities. The Spanish experiment in devolution is the first major concession to regionalism on a national scale in Europe since the establishment of the German Federal Republic. This study assesses the prospects for the autonomy process and its impact on Spanish political stability.

For centuries a divisive issue in Spanish politics, the regional question was “solved” by General Franco through repression. Forty years of denying the ethnic and linguistic diversity of Spain, however, only exacerbated regional tensions. After Franco’s death in 1975, Spain suffered a veritable explosion of regionalism that affected not only such traditional centers as the Basque Country and Catalonia, but also much of the rest of the nation. We view this expansion of regional consciousness as in part a repudiation of Francoism. Although much of the post-1975 regional assertiveness has proved to be ephemeral and imitative, it created an atmosphere favorable to large-scale devolution when Spain’s new leaders were drafting a democratic constitution during the period 1977-78.

The 1978 Constitution attempted to resolve the regional question by dividing Spain into autonomous regions, each with an individually tailored statute of autonomy detailing the regional government’s powers. Madrid retained control over international relations and defense, but was empowered to delegate authority over a wide variety of internal matters to the regions. Although the autonomy system on paper looked like a workable compromise, it was implemented during 1978-81 in a haphazard and accelerated fashion that in our view threatened to negate the political and administrative benefits of devolution. We believe that the proliferation of regional parties, the granting of regional status to several provinces, the costly duplications of bureaucracies, and disputes over regional symbols and languages contributed significantly to political instability in Spain during the two years leading up to the abortive military coup of 23 February 1981.

The coup attempt—spawned in large part by the alleged disintegration of the state—highlighted the perils of a makeshift and undisciplined autonomy process. The governing Union of the Democratic Center party (UCD) and the opposition Socialists (PSOE)—both bearing a share of the

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responsibility for the chaotic implementation of devolution—recognized the need to restructure the regional autonomy system. During 1981-82 the two parties negotiated the Organic Law for the Harmonization of the Autonomy Process (LOAPA), which limited the number of autonomous communities, established orderly procedures for transferring authority to the regions, limited the size and budgets of regional governments, and created a special fund to channel public investment into the less developed regions.

The fashion in which the LOAPA was formulated temporarily elevated political tensions. The UCD and the PSOE nearly disrupted the precarious public consensus for decentralization by excluding the regional parties from the negotiations over the bill and by introducing into the LOAPA a number of controversial clauses. Only by referring the LOAPA to the nation's Constitutional Tribunal before it became law—thereby lending credence to assertions by LOAPA supporters that they were not trying to undermine the constitutional provisions on autonomy—was some of the political tension attenuated in the months preceding the parliamentary election on 28 October 1982.

We believe that the results of the election confirmed this trend toward a less divisive treatment of autonomy questions. The election demonstrated that the regional parties—even in the Basque Country and Catalonia—have begun to lose strength relative to the national parties. National unity has also been strengthened by a peaking of regional enthusiasm in general and an acceptance by the right that the autonomy system does not threaten to destroy the state. The majority government formed by the PSOE has assured the regional parties that it is committed to autonomy even though it accepts the modifications called for by the LOAPA. The regional governments and parties have responded favorably to this new, more relaxed, atmosphere. They have dropped their threats to fight the LOAPA with civil disobedience and administrative noncompliance. Instead, they have pledged to abide by the decision of the Constitutional Tribunal and to negotiate with Madrid on the still unresolved details of devolution.

We also believe that national institutions—the monarchy, the parties, and the Constitutional Tribunal—are sufficiently strong to preserve the unity and stability of the state. As the autonomy process is completed over the next three to four years, it is our view that greater administrative efficiency

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and the recognition that some regions have special needs will help resolve a problem that has drained strength from the Spanish polity for centuries. This has substantially improved prospects for the long-term stability of the nation's democratic institutions.

Notwithstanding this favorable outlook, there are two matters that could set back the peaceful resolution of the regional autonomy issue. One is Basque terrorism. Despite the acceptance of autonomy by moderate Basque parties, the hardline terrorists of Basque Land and Liberty (ETA) will, in our view, be satisfied with nothing short of independence. Although the development of regional institutions should continue to reduce popular support for terrorism in the Basque Country, we expect ETA terrorism to remain a significant irritant in Spanish politics for the near and medium term. The other critical issue is the military. While content for now to let the country's civilian leaders try to find a workable balance between the aspirations of the regions and those of the state, the military is still prone to equate the pursuit of regionalism with disloyalty to Spain. The military's devotion to national unity so defined could prove counterproductive if a regime led or inspired by the armed forces came to power. Such a government might be tempted to reverse the Constitution's autonomy provisions—with potentially explosive political consequences.

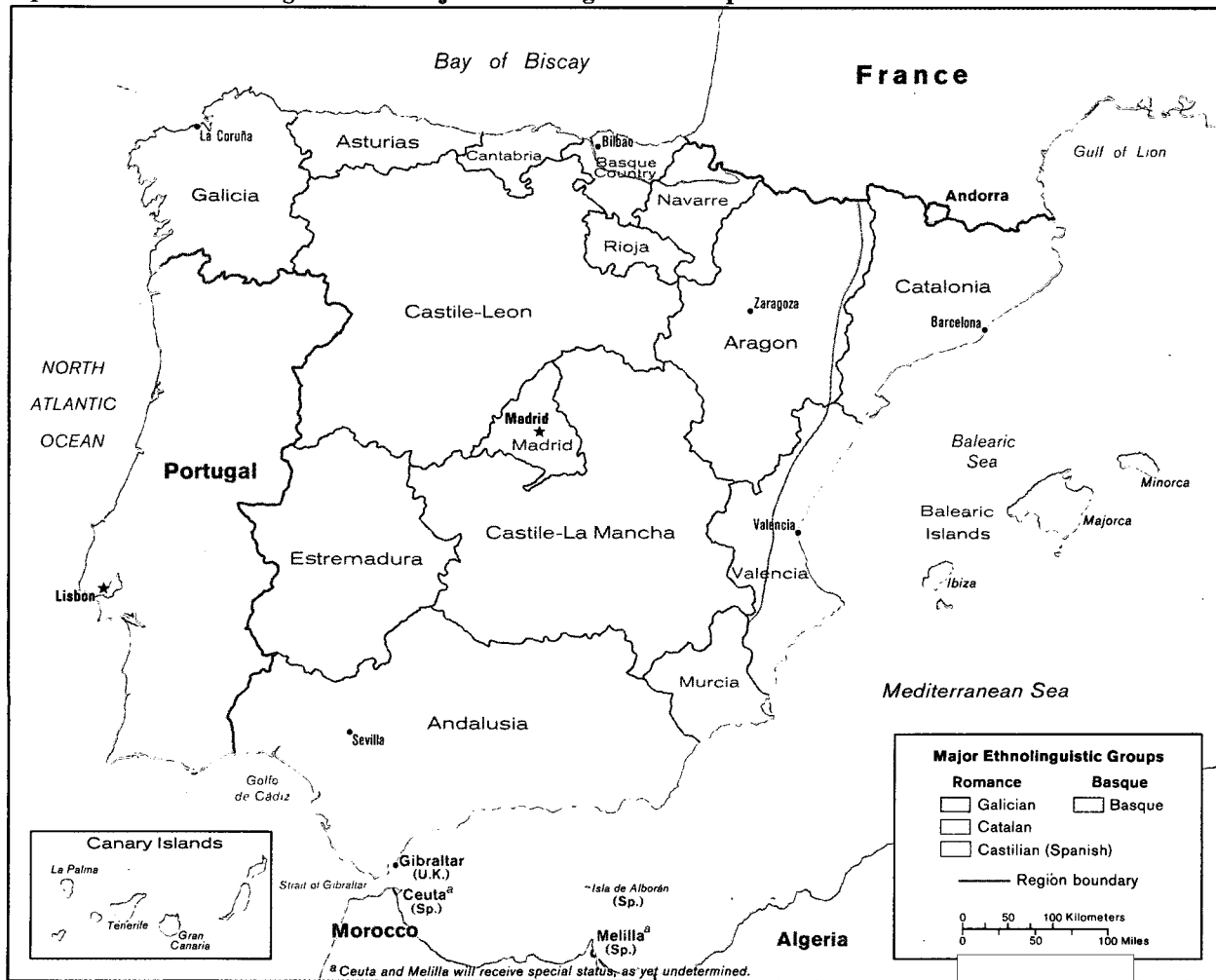
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Spain: Autonomous Regions and Major Ethnolinguistic Groups



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Spain: Regional Autonomy and Political Stability

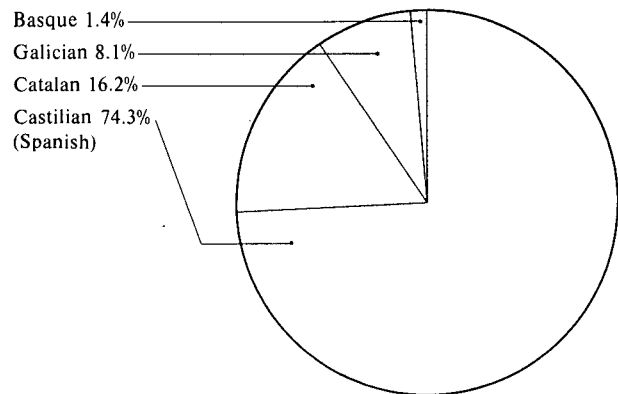
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Franco's Legacy: Deceptive Peace

Political friction between Madrid and Spain's regions—especially Catalonia and the Basque Country—played a key role in the collapse of the Second Spanish Republic and the outbreak of the Civil War (1936-39). The importance of regionalism in weakening the political fabric of pre-Civil War Spain was reflected in the draconian actions taken by Franco to suppress regional sentiment. Even before the war ended, the Franco regime repealed the autonomy statutes granted by the Second Republic; only the Provinces of Navarre and Alava—which had sided with the General—were allowed to retain a limited degree of administrative autonomy. Regional languages and culture were implacably suppressed. Most ominously, Franco linked centralism to the cardinal values of his regime: hypernationalism, ultra-Catholicism, and ultraconservative authoritarianism. Before 1936, the regionalist-centralist controversy had remained largely outside the bounds of the competition between left and right. Forty years of Francoist rule, however, inextricably associated centralism with the political right. Regionalism became a banner under which virtually all the regime's opponents could unite, and devolution—for the first time in Spanish history—became firmly linked with leftist politics.

Franco partially loosened his centralist policies during the 1960s. Any hope he may have had that three decades of Spanish nationalist propaganda had significantly weakened regionalist sentiment, however, was quickly dashed. In Catalonia the granting of limited freedom to publish in and to use the Catalan language revived semidormant cultural and political feelings. The Basque response was far more lethal: latent separatist tendencies reappeared in the form of the Basque Land and Liberty (ETA) terrorist organizations. ETA never seriously destabilized the Franco regime, but Franco's severe repression of what the international press described as a national liberation movement helped to undermine what little credibility his regime ever enjoyed.

Spain: Native Speakers of Official Languages



Note: Data based on best available estimates.

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The extent of Franco's failure to suppress regionalism became fully evident after 1975. The problem, however, did not simply revert to pre-Civil War status, when only the "historical regions" of Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia had demanded special treatment from Madrid. During the period 1975-78 voices were raised for autonomy in areas—Andalusia, for example—which had previously shown little interest in the idea. The passion for regionalism was also part of a general rejection, noted by numerous scholars and journalists, of nearly everything associated with the defunct dictatorship. At the same time, support for devolution was for many in the political elite an easy way of establishing credentials as a leftist or "lifelong democrat."

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Differences in Autonomist Sentiment

Spain's regions can be grouped into three categories with regard to the intensity of autonomist sentiment:

Catalonia and the Basque Country. Mass support for political autonomy is high in both regions, despite the presence of large unassimilated immigrant communities from elsewhere in Spain. According to a 1978 survey, 21 percent of Basques favored eventual independence for their region, while another 54 percent wanted some degree of autonomy. The same survey showed that 11 percent of Catalans desired eventual independence, and another 65 percent hoped for some measure of autonomy. Regional parties—promoting either independence or extensive autonomy—garnered 36.5 percent of the Basque vote and 22 percent of the Catalan vote in the parliamentary election of 1977. National parties of both the left and the center have found it necessary to grant considerable autonomy to their Basque and Catalan organizations in order to make them attractive to local voters.

Navarre, Galicia, and Andalusia. Here popular regional sentiment is considerable, but it has seldom engendered widespread separatist or anti-Spanish feelings. In fact, the 1978 survey revealed only a 9-percent preference for independence in Navarre, 8

percent in Galicia, and 5 percent in Andalusia. Navarrese regionalism is in part a defensive reaction against Basque desires to annex the province, which is partly Basque-speaking. Popular support for the regional culture and language in Galicia and Andalusian resentment of perceived economic mistreatment by Madrid lie behind a moderately strong desire for decentralization in these two areas.

Other Regions. We would argue that elsewhere in Spain regional consciousness has never been high; on the mass level it has been overshadowed by either Spanish nationalism (Castile, La Mancha) or subregional loyalties (Aragon, Balearic Islands). In most of these areas, demands for autonomy were generated from the top down, a product of regional elites who feared being ignored by Madrid if they did not clamor as loudly as the Basques and Catalans. This "defensive regionalism" found only tepid popular support and has proved far less lasting than even the Andalusian or Galician varieties. But during the first three years of the post-Franco era local politicians exerted enough pressure, and the press sufficiently exaggerated the extent of genuine popular desire for decentralization, that regionalism was publicly perceived as an ascendant force everywhere in Spain.

A First Stab at the Problem

During the year prior to the parliamentary election in June 1977, the government of Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez was preoccupied with transforming Spain into a democracy. The election of a constituent assembly charged with drafting a new constitution brought the regional question to the fore. The Suarez regime adopted a two-pronged strategy to deal with this challenge. The pressing Basque and Catalan cases received immediate and individual attention, whereas the less strident demands of the other regions were put off pending the development of a general package addressing the new structure of the state.

The government's first step was to grant Catalonia (in September 1977) and the Basque Country (in January 1978) ambiguous "preautonomy" status. The "preautonomy councils" thereby created lacked concrete

administrative or legislative authority, but they served as an explicit acknowledgement by Madrid that Francoist centralism was dead. Combined with the lifting of the dictatorship's sanctions against regional languages and symbols, preautonomy at least partially met Basque and Catalan demands. It also laid the groundwork for negotiations between the government and the principal Basque and Catalan regional political forces—the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) and the Catalan Convergence and Union Coalition (CiU).

Preautonomy was only a temporary palliative; a comprehensive approach to the regional problem had to await the constitutional debates of 1978. The Constitution—approved in December of that year—rejected both an explicitly federal system and the solution

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Catalans demanding the reestablishment of self-government in 1977

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adopted during the 1930s, a unitary state with concessions to a few select regions. An ill-defined compromise was eventually agreed upon granting extensive powers to the regions but stopping short of formal federalism.

We suspect that Spain's political leadership did not fully appreciate the implications of the wide-ranging decentralization mandated by the Constitution. To placate the right Madrid theoretically reserved for itself all but the most innocuous administrative authority. However, the provision that allowed Madrid in practice to delegate a significant number of these powers to the regions via the autonomy statutes made possible the creation of a federal system in all but name. We believe that Madrid's intention in granting a unique statute to each region was to allow for higher levels of autonomy in the more developed and regionally conscious areas. Government officials probably

did not anticipate that all the regions would ultimately demand the same powers conceded to the Basque Country and Catalonia.

Over the Precipice?

The immensity of the autonomy process mandated by the Constitution would have challenged the most stable and methodical of governments; the Suarez administration of 1979-80 was distinguished by neither of these characteristics. The Constitution provided a legal framework for devolution, but it was the government's responsibility to establish a timetable and assure the orderly transfer of powers to the regions. In our view, the Suarez government failed to accomplish these goals, partly because of its own political weakness, and partly because negotiations

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Key Element of the Autonomy System

- *Spain is divided into "Autonomous Communities," each with an elected legislature and executive.*
 - *Each Autonomous Community receives an individually tailored statute of autonomy detailing the regional government's authority.*
 - *Madrid retains absolute control of defense and international relations.*
 - *The central government holds primary authority over justice; commercial, labor, and civil law; regulations affecting the monetary and banking systems; public safety; and general educational norms. The state can delegate part or all of these powers to the regions.*
 - *Autonomous Communities can declare a regional language as co-official with Spanish.*
 - *The transfer of powers to the regions takes place via a "two-track" system. One route (envisaged for the Basque Country and Catalonia) results in rapid movement toward full autonomy, while the slower process (designed for the remaining regions) phases in regional powers over a five-year period.*
 - *A Constitutional Tribunal exists to adjudicate disputes between Madrid and the regions.*
-

with the Basque PNV and a coalition of Catalan parties over the content of their regions' respective statutes of autonomy left Suarez little time during 1979 for the overall coordination of the autonomy process.

In our view, the Suarez government made matters worse by accelerating a process it could neither supervise nor control. From September 1977 to October 1978, preautonomy councils were granted to 13 regions, encompassing the bulk of the peninsula. Polls reveal that in Galicia and Andalusia there was considerable popular demand for quick progress on autonomy, but in many other regions the initiative stemmed, in our view, as much from Madrid as from the

periphery. The motives behind these actions are still not entirely clear. We believe that on one level Suarez was trying to cash in on a popular issue and give his government a fashionable leftist cachet. On another level Suarez probably believed that a rapid generalization of the autonomy process would somehow dilute or undermine the influence of Basque and Catalan regional politicians and parties. The government was soon faced with a chaotic situation that threatened not only its own stability but also the integrity of the Spanish state.

The regionalist chaos of 1979-80 had several specific manifestations:

- The proliferation of demands by single provinces for recognition as regions.
- Jurisdictional clashes between overlapping regional and national bureaucracies.
- The growth of regional political parties which threatened to undermine the national party system. (See appendix B for a full discussion of the regional parties.)
- Discord over the proper use of regional symbols and languages generating political tensions.
- Demands to speed up and equalize the autonomy process in all regions, which further strained the system.

To its credit, the Suarez government eventually perceived the dangers of the process it had helped set in motion. Suarez first attempted to decelerate and reorder the autonomy process during the debate on the autonomy statute for Andalusia, which the region's preautonomy council wanted the government to process as quickly as possible. The government's procrastination on Andalusian autonomy was opposed by several regional parties and the opposition Socialists (PSOE). The political battering suffered by the UCD during this dispute marked, in our view, the beginning of the party's decline in Spanish politics. Combined with the UCD's losses in the regional elections in 1980 in the Basque Country and Catalonia, the Andalusian autonomy conflict decisively weakened the Suarez government. The dispute also suggested that any reordering of the system could not be successfully imposed by the UCD alone, but would have to emerge from a consensus of the government and the opposition.

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Genesis of the LOAPA

A perception in some military circles that the autonomy process was careening out of control was widely understood to be a key motive behind the assault on the Chamber of Deputies on 23 February 1981 in Madrid by disgruntled military officers. The more politically sophisticated of the plotters made clear in their public statements that they objected to what they viewed as the excesses of regionalism, not to the concept itself. The radical faction behind the abortive coup, however, was in our view unalterably opposed to the idea of regional devolution. But both groups openly denounced the process as it unfolded during 1978-80 as a threat to Spanish national unity. We believe that other factors—terrorism, the weakness of Suarez's government, the fear of Communism—incensed the military, but it would be difficult to exaggerate the emotive force of the regional question in the barracks.

During the year following the failed coup—when Spanish politics was conditioned by the fear of a more successful military rebellion—Madrid attempted again to slow down and reorganize regional devolution. The result was the Organic Law for the Harmonization of the Autonomy Process (LOAPA) presented to Parliament during the summer of 1982. As important as the coup attempt was in shaping the politicians' thinking about regionalism, it would be simplistic to attribute the LOAPA's origins solely to the politicians' desires to placate military hostility toward autonomy. Concern over the direction and speed of the autonomy process preceded the coup attempt and was shared by a wide segment of the political spectrum. In fact, the Union of the Democratic Center's (UCD's) effort to rein in Andalusian autonomy had begun in September 1980, when Territorial Administration Minister Martin Villa had urged revision of the procedures for accession to autonomy for all regions. Furthermore, the LOAPA itself, although first proposed by the UCD, became a joint initiative of the UCD and the Socialists, who negotiated the bill laboriously during 1981-82. The bill aimed at limiting both the speed and the scope of the unwieldy autonomy process. Specifically it called for:

- Limiting the total number of Autonomous Communities to 17, thereby halting the proliferation of single-province regions.

- Processing the autonomy statutes for all regions except Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia, and Andalusia via the slow track provided for in the Constitution.
- Limiting strictly the size and budgets of the regional cabinets and legislatures.
- Restructuring the procedures for transferring taxing authority and administrative powers from Madrid to the regions.
- Creating an Interterritorial Compensation Fund to funnel public investment to the poorest regions. There was widespread concern among both the government and the opposition that regional autonomy would exacerbate the already considerable economic disparities between the more and less developed areas. The UCD government argued that these disparities, if unchecked, would eventually generate public resentment in the poorest regions that could severely undermine national unity.

The bill's supporters publicly pledged that it would not undercut the authority of the already constituted Autonomous Communities. The Basque and Catalan regional governments and parties vigorously opposed the measure, however, instinctively fearing that Madrid would interpret the law in ways harmful to their interests. By spurning the regional parties' requests to help draft the bill, the UCD and the PSOE assured that they would suspect the worst.

To combat what were perceived as real dangers to devolution, the Basque, Catalan, and Andalusian regional parties—along with the Communists, who were miffed at having also been excluded from the law's drafting—formed an "anti-LOAPA front" in September 1982. PNV-controlled municipalities staged a 24-hour work stoppage to protest the bill, and the party publicly threatened to sponsor civil disobedience and administrative noncompliance by its elected officials if the LOAPA became law. In Catalonia vast anti-LOAPA demonstrations raised political tensions. By the fall of 1982 it seemed that the LOAPA, designed to reduce the danger of regionalist-induced political instability, had only aggravated the problem.

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Demonstration against the LOAPA in the Basque Country



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There was, however, one bright spot on the horizon. Realizing that the bill's constitutionality was at issue, the Socialists—quickly seconded by the UCD—proposed that it be referred to the Constitutional Tribunal before receiving final parliamentary approval. This lent credence to assertions by LOAPA supporters that they were not trying to undermine the Constitution's provisions concerning autonomy. The court's acceptance of the case helped minimize the extent to which autonomy became an issue during the 1982 election campaign.

The Socialists in Power: Ebbing of the Regionalist Tide?

We believe that the referral of the LOAPA to the Constitutional Tribunal was indeed a decisive turning point in the autonomy process. It signaled a willingness by both regional and national parties to desist from mudslinging and begin a more constructive debate on regional issues. This trend has been reinforced by a number of developments over the past six months: the overwhelming victory of the Socialists in the election last year, the formation of a government in Madrid not beholden to the votes of regional parties for survival, indications that regional enthusiasm in general has peaked, and acceptance by the right of the autonomy system. These factors have, in

our view, created an environment in which the regionalists are prepared to accept the assurances of the Socialist government that it is committed to autonomy even though it intends to implement the key adjustments envisaged in the LOAPA. The tension surrounding the regional question has subsided significantly in recent months, and we believe that the autonomy process is no longer one of the chief obstacles to political stability in Spain.

Last October's election provided the clearest evidence of the changing mood. Some of the Socialists' electoral success was due to the national scope of the election; Spanish voters have tended to give greater support to regional parties in regional elections. Nevertheless, the Socialists' showing in the Basque Country and Catalonia—where the party had been in decline and was forecast to do poorly—demonstrated that a Madrid-run party can still triumph in areas with highly developed regional identities. The Socialists are now the premier political force in Catalonia—with 24 deputies to 12 for the CiU—and have pulled almost even with the PNV in the Basque Country. Thus the PSOE demonstrated that its support of the LOAPA was not a significant electoral handicap even

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in those areas most skeptical of the government's intentions on the autonomy issue. We believe that the voters sensed that the purpose of the bill was to modify, not emasculate, the autonomy system and voted accordingly.

Also significant is evidence that regionalist enthusiasm in general has peaked. The election slowed the five-year growth trend of regional parties, reducing the danger that the proliferation of such parties would seriously weaken national political associations. In the Basque Country, for example, the proportion of the electorate voting for regional parties dropped to 53.7 percent from 64.5 percent in 1980, and the decline in other regions was comparable. The Andalusian Socialist Party, whose emergence in the national election of 1979 had seemed to herald an ominous splintering of the party system, lost over three-fourths of its voters and has been reduced to extraparliamentary status. Furthermore, voters backed moderate regional parties at the expense of more radical, quasi-separatist forces. The moderate PNV widened its lead over the two parties generally associated with branches of ETA, Herri Batasuna (HB) and Euskadiko Ezkerra (EE). In Catalonia, separatist parties—never serious political contenders—saw their tiny fraction of the vote further reduced.

Another factor contributing, in our view, to the current regionalist detente has been the right's acceptance of autonomy. The leading rightist party, Manuel Fraga's Popular Alliance (AP), had previously lobbied to rid the Constitution of what it perceived as the most dangerous concessions to regionalism. During and after the 1982 campaign, however, it conspicuously failed to defend hardline centralism and uttered not a word about constitutional revision. In fact, the president of the AP-controlled Galician regional government has become a vociferous proponent of autonomy and has publicly lamented the slow pace at which power is being transferred from Madrid. We believe that only the ultraright continues to oppose devolution in principle, and we conclude that the association of regionalism with anti-Francoism, so pervasive during 1975-78, is on the wane. Now that the autonomy process is more controlled, the right has fewer worries about the integrity of the Spanish state and is seeing that it, too, can gain from the system.

The PSOE government also has played a key role in reducing tension over the autonomy question by declining to use its absolute majority in Parliament to ram through measures harmful to regional interests. Instead, it has begun a well-orchestrated public campaign to assure the Basque, Catalan, Galician, and Andalusian regional governments that Madrid views the LOAPA as in no way reducing the basic powers already granted to these regions in the statutes of autonomy. The Minister for Territorial Administration—a drafter of the LOAPA whose appointment had initially angered some regionalists—has initiated a series of what appear to us to be constructive contacts with top regional leaders. His ministry has appointed well-qualified and sympathetic interlocutors to act as "Delegates of the Government" in the autonomous communities. On a higher level, Prime Minister Gonzalez has met with Jordi Pujol and Carlos Garaicoechea, presidents respectively of the Catalan and Basque regional governments, and all three have publicly affirmed their support for the autonomy process as currently restructured. In our view the Socialist government's finesse and diplomacy in dealing with the regions contrasts favorably with the manner in which the LOAPA was formulated and the disregard for regional sentiment that characterized the last phases of the UCD administration.

The regions have responded favorably to the changed atmosphere in Madrid. Notwithstanding their pre-electoral pledges of unalterable opposition to the LOAPA, both the PNV and the CiU have now announced their willingness to accept whatever decision the Constitutional Tribunal renders concerning the law's constitutionality.¹ Talk of civil disobedience and administrative noncompliance in the Basque Country and Catalonia has virtually ceased. Presidents Pujol and Garaicoechea have expressed publicly their contentment with the pace of and the procedures

¹ The LOAPA is still under review by the court; a decision is expected before mid-1983. Press reports indicate that the Tribunal may find several of the most imprecise and controversial articles of the law unconstitutional. In that case a new version would be drafted to meet the court's objections and to mollify the members of the (now dissolved) anti-LOAPA front. In the best of circumstances the revised LOAPA would obtain the parliamentary approval, or at least the acquiescence, of the moderate regionalist parties—the PNV and the CiU—in addition to that of the PSOE and the AP before becoming law.

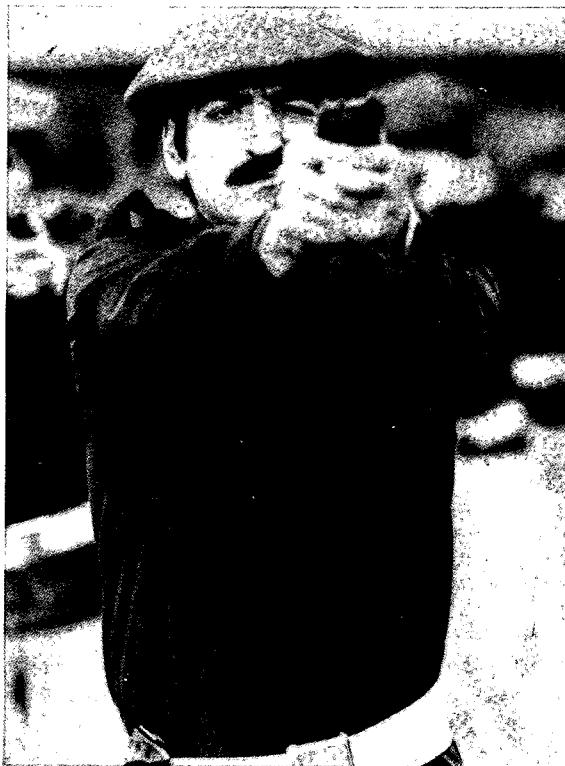
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governing the transfer of powers from Madrid to their regional administrations; all the transfers are scheduled to be complete by late 1983.

Outlook: Enhanced Political Stability

We believe that the flexibility recently shown by all parties involved in devolution heralds a new phase in the movement toward regional autonomy. Our reading of the public record suggests that for the first time in contemporary Spanish history, a broad consensus is emerging regarding the desirability of giving Spain's regions autonomy within certain clearly defined limits. With the exceptions of the ultraright—including elements of the military—and the Basque separatists, no important political force in Spain today questions either the need for autonomy or the broad outlines of the solution adopted in the 1978 Constitution. The process is far from complete: outside of the Basque Country and Catalonia, Madrid has divested itself of only 10 to 15 percent of the powers slated ultimately for the regions. This process, decelerated by the LOAPA, will not be complete for all regions until 1985 at the earliest. Nevertheless, the progress made so far has gone a long way toward resolving a problem that has consistently weakened the Spanish polity in the past. In our view, this has substantially improved prospects for the long-term stability of Spain's democratic institutions.

In particular, we believe that political leaders in Catalonia and the Basque Country are striking a balance between regional assertiveness and solidarity with the rest of Spain. It should be noted that the slogan used by Catalan anti-LOAPA demonstrators even during the tense months before the election last year implied loyalty to Madrid: "Change Catalonia from Madrid? No! Improve Madrid from Catalonia!" Acceptance of a Spanish vocation is not so well developed in the Basque Country, but we think that the successful implementation of Basque autonomy will over the long run diminish separatist sentiment. At the very least, a functioning regional government will have a better chance than Madrid to mobilize Basque opinion against ETA. We believe that the expansion of the duties of the regional police force to include counterterrorist activity—at present it is restricted largely to symbolic and traffic duties—will be a key feature of this process: Basque politicians have often affirmed that when ETA shoots its first Basque



*Basque regional policeman:
taking aim at ETA?*

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policeman, all but the most fanatical separatists will finally become disillusioned with the terrorist organization.

We believe that the more general problems of devolution are also being successfully addressed. The Interterritorial Compensation Fund established by the LOAPA should at least prevent the autonomy system from worsening existing economic imbalances among the regions. Madrid is taking care to assure that regional institutions replace, rather than overlap, the national administration. There is a chance that this process may actually reduce red tape and make the bureaucracy more responsive, if only because routine decisions will no longer have to be referred to Madrid. At the very least, the transfer of government employees from central to regional jurisdiction will help modernize the Spanish administration and bring it

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more into line with European norms. In 1977—before autonomy got under way—only 19 percent of Spanish public servants were employed by municipal or provincial government, compared with an average 41 percent in the European Community. The transfer of people will be accompanied by a transfer of funds. According to academic estimates, the autonomy system will eventually reduce the ratio of central government expenditures as a percentage of total public-sector spending from over 80 percent to under 50 percent. Among the world's major federal states only Canada and Australia allot a greater proportion of public-sector expenditures to regional and local government.

A final reason for optimism is the strength of many national institutions and symbols, which we believe will hold in check the centrifugal forces engendered by regionalism. Not only are the revitalized national political parties—particularly the PSOE and the AP—playing a role, but some regional parties, apparently sensing their reduced influence since the last election, have begun, as well, to search for ways to increase their impact on the national political scene. The leftist Basque Euskadiko Ezkerra party has begun to give public emphasis to its class, rather than its regionalist, character, and has hinted at closer cooperation with the PSOE. In Catalonia, CiU leader Miquel Roca has questioned his party's preoccupation with parochial Catalan issues and is openly pushing for a federation of regional parties designed to reconstruct a centrist movement at the national level.

Another key unifying force is the Constitutional Tribunal. Lack of respect for the decisions of its Second Republic counterpart contributed significantly to the regional tensions that helped bring about the Civil War. The present court, however, has already established its authority. It has heard several important disputes between Madrid and the regions, and its decisions have been accepted by all parties. We believe that its judgment regarding the constitutionality of the LOAPA will reinforce the Tribunal's reputation as a respected and impartial arbiter.

One more national institution should be mentioned: the monarchy. Once scorned by many as Franco's handpicked successor, King Juan Carlos has, in our view, transformed himself into a symbol of national



Camera Press ©

*King Juan Carlos and Prince Felipe:
symbols of national unity*

pride and unity. That the vast majority of the population views Juan Carlos as the King of all Spaniards was shown by the recent request of the Catalan regional government that Crown Prince Felipe be proclaimed Prince of Gerona—the traditional title of the heirs to the medieval Catalan monarchy. Thus the Catalans clearly see their regional identity reflected in the national symbol of monarchy.

Confidential**... But Problems Remain**

Notwithstanding this favorable outlook, there are several factors that could disrupt the orderly transition to greater regional autonomy. In our view, the foremost of these is Basque terrorism. Despite efforts by the PNV and the Basque regional government to discredit the terrorists, roughly one-sixth of the Basque electorate continues to vote for parties (especially Herri Batasuna) linked to various branches of ETA. Although the successful development of Basque institutions can be expected over time to reduce recruitment and popular support for ETA, we believe that the hardcore terrorists and their dwindling civilian allies will continue to be satisfied with nothing short of absolute independence. The recent collapse of the tripartite talks among Herri Batasuna, the PSOE, and the PNV regarding terrorism has, we believe, convinced Madrid at least for now of the futility of pressing for a negotiated solution to Basque violence.

[redacted] We think that Spain's democratic institutions are sufficiently resilient for the near future to tolerate both the existing level of terrorism and the police procedures designed to combat it. In our view, only rapid and significant escalation of violence would threaten the development of the autonomy system and Spain's political stability in general.

Basque terrorism retains this potential to generate instability largely because segments of the armed forces and the ultraright could use it as a partial justification to intervene in politics. In our view, terrorism alone is unlikely to induce the military to intervene in politics in the short term. However, it is possible that a combination of economic collapse, serious social disorder, government meddling in internal military affairs, and resurgent terrorism could provoke a coup d'etat. Once in power, the military might be tempted to reverse some of the Constitution's provisions for autonomy—with potentially explosive political consequences. A military-led or inspired regime would almost certainly alienate the regions, thereby increasing political instability and in all likelihood hastening its own demise.

While less dramatic than the threats posed to autonomy by terrorism or military intervention, several other potential threats could have more immediate impact. Disputes may develop concerning the pace and nature of the transfer of the powers Madrid has yet to hand over to the regions. Less developed regions may prove initially inept at handling their new powers. Basque regionalists may renew their divisive campaign to integrate the Province of Navarre into the Basque autonomous community. The creation of separate Catalan and Spanish school systems and media in Catalonia could retard the integration of the region's Spanish speakers into the Catalan-speaking elite, with serious consequences for social cohesion.

Successive governments will have to address these challenges as the country's new territorial and administrative configuration is fleshed out. Luckily, the decision to recognize rather than suppress Spain's regional, ethnic, and linguistic diversity has, we believe, strengthened Spanish democracy and enhanced the prospects for long-term political stability. Having successfully absorbed the shocks of the first phases of regional autonomy, Spain appears well positioned to see the process through to a favorable conclusion.

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Appendix A

Regionalism in Spanish History

After Yugoslavia, Spain is the most ethnically and linguistically varied of the major European states. Barely three-fourths of the people are native Spanish speakers; the remainder speak the related Romance languages of Catalan or Galician, or the primitive Basque tongue. These ethno-linguistic fissures imperfectly parallel historical and political divisions. Spain grew out of the free federation of several kingdoms, and the country's 18th century Bourbon monarchs never quashed regional sentiment and autonomy as effectively as did their French cousins. The memory of independent kingdoms is still alive in Catalonia, Navarre, and to a lesser degree Galicia. And the Basques, while never forming an independent state, take pride in having resisted both Roman and Muslim invaders and in having received special privileges from the Crown of Castile.

This particularism has been a source of political weakness and instability throughout Spanish history. Friction between Castile and Aragon contributed decisively to Spain's 17th-century decline; the Catalans rebelled on several occasions and did not hesitate to ally themselves with the French against Madrid. Similar dynastic struggles, intertwined with regional loyalties, precipitated the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-14), which removed Spain from the ranks of Europe's great powers. Bourbon centralization brought a temporary veneer of stability, but regional and local sentiment reemerged during the early 19th century. The sway of localism reached unmatched heights in 1873, when a Federal Republic was proclaimed. Entire provinces, counties, and even cities declared themselves independent and openly flouted Madrid's authority. Only military intervention prevented the total disintegration of the state.

No sooner were the centrifugal tendencies of the Federal Republic subdued than a new challenge to Spanish unity emerged: regional nationalism. Modern regionalist sentiment, based more on the mystique of shared language and culture than on the historical or local loyalties that had fueled past disputes between Madrid and local authorities, arose after 1875 in

Catalonia and the Basque Country and to a lesser extent in Galicia. The expression of these feelings aroused deep fears of separatism elsewhere in the country and stimulated a counternationalism in Castile, the Spanish-speaking heartland. In fact, only Basque regionalism contained a strong separatist component. Catalan regionalists, blessed with a literary and cultural renaissance, were far more confident of their identity and far less strident in their demands. This was succinctly expressed in the slogan "for a free Catalonia within a reborn Spain!" Basque regionalists, on the other hand, developed a theory of Basque racial superiority in order to compensate for their lack of a vibrant culture and a language adaptable to the needs of the modern world.

Basque and Catalan regionalism had especially serious consequences because the Basque Country and Catalonia contained the bulk of Spanish industry and the country's first modern political parties. Basque and Catalan demands for regional autonomy preoccupied the central government during the first third of the 20th century, deflecting attention from other serious social and economic problems. The Second Republic granted statutes of autonomy to Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia, but the immense distrust between Madrid and the regions could not be easily overcome: disputes between regionalists and Spanish nationalists ranked second only to fear of Communism and fascism as a cause of the Republic's collapse and the Civil War (1936-39).



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Appendix B

Regional Parties in Spain

Although the parliamentary election of 1982 substantially strengthened Spain's principal national parties—the Socialists and the rightist Popular Alliance—the regional parties still play a key role in the political system. Truly independent regional parties—directed from a regional capital rather than from Madrid—are strong only in the Basque Country, Catalonia, and, to a far lesser extent, Andalusia and Navarre. The national parties, however, have in our view maintained their electoral supremacy in part through granting considerable autonomy to their regional branches. While party discipline is invoked on major issues, the Basque and Catalan affiliates of both the PSOE and the Communist Party (PCE) are allowed considerable leeway on exclusively regional matters. Generally, national parties have been able to head off confrontations with their regional branches by offering them special privileges or the freedom to adopt policies slightly at variance with those of the mother party. Both the Basque and Catalan Socialists, for example, were allowed to form their own parliamentary groups in past legislatures, and the PSOE did not force them to speak out publicly in favor of the Organic Law for the Harmonization of the Autonomy Process. In some cases, however—for example, in the Communist Party and its Catalan affiliate (PSUC)—quarrels over substantive issues between a regional branch party and Madrid have imperiled the party's unity.

The national parties of the right—the AP and the defunct Union of the Democratic Center—have made far fewer concessions to their regional branches. We believe this stems largely from the pervasive association of regionalism with leftism and anti-Francoism in the years immediately following 1975. In those days a rightist party could stand at most for minimal administrative autonomy within a still highly centralized state structure. This pattern tended to carry over into the internal organization of these parties. As the equation of regionalism and leftism has waned, rightist forces have shown more sympathy with regional causes and may grant greater autonomy to their regional affiliates in the future.

Only one branch party and one branch party leader have attained real political stature and influence. The PSUC has always exercised considerable authority within the Spanish Communist Party by virtue of its size: although Catalonia accounts for only 15 percent of Spain's population, it contains more than a third of its Communist voters. The PSUC, however, suffered along with the PCE in the October 1982 parliamentary election, losing nearly three-fourths of its support. Although its relative importance within Communist ranks continues, these ranks are now so depleted as to deprive the PSUC of a significant voice in Spanish politics.

The only branch party leader to become a spokesman for his region and a significant political player is Rafael Escuredo, leader of the PSOE's Andalusian affiliate. This is almost entirely a personal triumph; the Andalusian branch of the PSOE has never enjoyed the autonomy granted to the Basque and Catalan Socialist parties. As president of the Andalusian regional government, Escuredo has attained levels of influence and name recognition rivaled among regional politicians only by the presidents of the Basque and Catalan regional governments. By contrast, the lackluster AP president of the Galician regional government has been unable to establish an independent identity. He and his party remain completely overshadowed by the AP's national leader.

Basque Parties

Basque Nationalist Party (Partido Nacionalista Vasco). The oldest regional party, the PNV was founded by Sabino Arana, the father of Basque regionalism, in 1895. Initially an ultraclerical, far-right authoritarian party, the PNV advocated forming the Spanish Basque Country, the contiguous Province of Navarre, and the small French Basque region into an independent nation. Handicapped by the frailties of Basque culture and language, Arana and the PNV emphasized alleged Basque racial superiority and called for the expulsion of non-Basque immigrants from the Basque Country.

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Table 1
Percentage of Vote in the Basque Region, 1977 to 1982^a

	1977 ^b	1979 ^b	1980 ^c	1982 ^b
Regional parties				
Basque Nationalist Party (PNV)	29.3	27.1	38.1	31.3
Euskadiko Ezkerra (EE)	6.0	8.0	9.9	7.7
Herri Batasuna (HB)		15.0	16.5	14.7
Subtotal, regional parties	35.3	50.7	64.5	53.7
National parties				
Socialist Workers Party (PSOE)	25.8	18.6	14.2	28.3
Union of the Democratic Center (UCD)	12.5	16.5	8.5	
Communist Party (PCE)	4.4	4.4	4.0	1.9
Popular Alliance (AP) ^d	4.3	3.3	4.8	11.1
Other ^e	17.7	6.4	4.0	5.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

^a Includes the provinces of Alava, Guipuzcoa, and Vizcaya.

^b National legislative election.

^c Election to Basque regional parliament.

^d In 1982 AP and UCD presented joint lists in the Basque region.

^e Includes minor regional and national parties, null and blank votes.

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The PNV has mellowed considerably over the past half century. It is now a centrist, Christian Democratic party. The attractiveness of Basque independence has diminished, and the party officially accepts the Constitution's autonomy provisions. A small segment of the party, however, still clamors for eventual separation from Spain and accuses the PNV leadership of having "betrayed" Sabino Arana's ideals.

In the past the PNV refused to condemn the separatist-terrorist organization, Basque Land and Liberty, partially to guard against accusations of less than total commitment to regionalism, partially because top party leaders were genuinely skeptical about working out a satisfactory compromise with Madrid concerning devolution. ETA grew out of a PNV youth group in the 1950s, and the party, instinctively sympathetic to some of the group's goals if not its methods, was reluctant to criticize it openly. In 1980, however, the party won the regional parliamentary election and established a PNV government in Vitoria under regional President Carlos Garaicoechea. This

has given the PNV a stake in the autonomy system established by the Constitution and has speeded its evolution toward a more moderate regionalist position. We believe that the PNV now fully recognizes the danger ETA poses to both Spanish democracy and Basque autonomy and will cooperate in efforts—on both the political and police levels—to combat the terrorist organization.

The Basque Left (Euskadiko Ezkerra). EE was the first party to mount a successful challenge to the PNV's monopoly of regionalist politics in the Basque Country. It did this from a leftist perspective, attempting to weld socialism to Basque regionalism. EE began as a coalition of small proindependence parties, all openly boasting of their links to the political-military branch of ETA; indeed, the party's leadership always has included some amnestied ex-ETA terrorists. Despite these origins, EE has grown steadily more moderate during its seven years of existence.

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While not formally dropping the goal of eventual separation from Spain, EE has for now accepted autonomy for the Basque Country as the best available alternative. The party has even attacked ETA—especially that organization's military wing—for pointlessly provoking the military. During the past year EE has attempted to strengthen its socialist credentials by fusing with a fragment of the Basque branch of the PCE and emphasizing the need to defend class, as well as regional interests. This strategy has not paid off electorally: in the parliamentary election of 1982, EE's share of the Basque vote dropped for the first time since its formation. This disappointment was followed by the resignation of the party's more militantly regionalist members. We believe that EE, unable to compete with the PSOE as a socialist party and caught between the regionalist options of the PNV and Herri Batasuna, has little hope of attracting more than the 7 to 10 percent of the Basque electorate it has traditionally represented.

Popular Unity (Herri Batasuna). Founded in 1978 by the fusion of several Communist and non-Communist regional parties, HB has become the most radical and disruptive of the Basque political groups. Although it considers itself a leftist party—and many of its founders are Marxist-Leninists—HB is vague in its socioeconomic proposals; its economic plank is so innocuous that virtually any party could subscribe to it. The party's driving force is the aim of total and immediate independence for the Basque Country and the defense of ETA, especially its military branch. Unlike EE, HB has resolutely refused to moderate its positions. Despite its status as the third-largest party in the region (with a steady 15 to 16 percent of the vote) and despite having elected deputies both to the national and regional parliaments, HB neither recognizes nor participates in either Spanish national or Basque regional institutions.¹ The party continues to back ETA and shows no sign of losing the allegiance of its over 200,000 Basque voters. HB today does little more than foster Spanish-Basque enmity, but its persistence as a major regional party indicates that a

¹ Ironically, the refusal of the 11 HB deputies elected to the regional parliament in 1980 to take their seats enhanced the governability of the Basque region. Their absence gave the PNV an absolute majority of those deputies present and voting, enabling it to form a stable one-party regional government.

significant proportion of the Basque population remains dissatisfied with autonomy. We believe that a decline in HB's vote would be a clear sign that the Basque region was coming to grips with its status as an autonomous community.

Catalan Parties

Convergence and Union (Convergencia i Unio). CiU is a coalition of Jordi Pujol's *Convergencia Democràtica de Catalunya* party and the much smaller Christian Democratic *Unio Democràtica de Catalunya* party. Dominated by Pujol and his party, CiU occupies a position in Catalan politics roughly analogous to that of the PNV in Basque affairs: both are moderate, center-right parties that control their region's autonomous government. CiU, however, lacks the proindependence and racist roots of the PNV. It is heir to an open, broadly liberal tradition of regionalism that has always seen Catalonia as an integral part of Spain. The indigenous middle class that is the coalition's principal support has always been more confident than its Basque counterpart of its ethnic identity. Consequently, CiU lacks the intense suspicion of Madrid and the residual separatist ambitions that still occasionally make themselves felt in the PNV.

Since the regional election of 1980, CiU has dominated the Catalan regional government. Regional President Pujol has adopted cautious, conservative socioeconomic policies not far removed from those advocated by the AP. But Pujol has always sought to distance his coalition from the right, largely, in our view, because of the popular tendency until recent years to equate rightism with centralism. CiU consistently emphasizes its centrist vocation, and Pujol's lieutenant, Miquel Roca, has even suggested that the coalition serve as the axis around which a revitalized statewide centrist political force could be formed. Such a project is testimony to CiU's lack of parochialism, but it may be overly ambitious. We believe that the prospects are poor for either a statewide centrist party or a federation of parties and that CiU runs the risk of losing hardcore regionalist support if it appears to be compromising its political independence.

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Table 2
Percentage of Vote in Catalonia, 1977 to 1982 ^a

	1977 ^b	1979 ^b	1980 ^c	1982 ^b
Regional parties				
Convergence and Union (CiU)	16.0	16.1	27.7	22.3
Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC)	4.5	4.1	8.9	4.0
Subtotal, regional parties	20.5	20.2	36.6	26.3
National parties				
Socialist Workers Party (PSC-PSOE)	28.4	29.2	22.5	43.6
Communist Party (PSUC)	18.2	17.1	18.7	4.7
Union of the Democratic Center (CC-UCD)	16.8	19.1	10.5	2.0
Popular Alliance (AP)	3.8	3.7	2.3	15.0
Other ^d	12.3	9.8	9.4	8.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

^a Includes the Provinces of Lerida, Gerona, Barcelona and Tarragona.

^b National legislative election.

^c Election to Catalan regional parliament.

^d Includes minor regional and national parties, null and blank votes.

Republican Left of Catalonia (*Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*). During the 1930s ERC was the dominant party in Catalonia and controlled the regional government. Today it is something of a political oddity, the only major Spanish party to insist upon its republican and leftist credentials, while opposing any hue of Marxism or socialism. Its leader, Heribert Barrera, has used his position as president of the regional parliament to stir up antagonism between Catalan- and Spanish-speaking residents of the region and to portray his party as the only true defender of Catalan interests. Despite its militant Catalanist ideology and often shrill rhetoric, ERC, in our view, has demonstrated its pragmatism by supporting the CiU regional government; it cannot be described as a Catalan equivalent of EE or HB. ERC regularly garners 5 to 9 percent of the regional vote.

Other Regions

The only significant regional party outside Catalonia and the Basque Country is the Andalusian Socialist Party (PSA). The PSA claims that underdeveloped

Andalusia has been economically exploited by Madrid and the wealthy Basque and Catalan regions. The PSA's radicalism, however, has been strictly verbal; politically it has operated in a highly pragmatic—some have said unprincipled—fashion, cutting deals with both former Prime Minister Suarez and the right. We believe that this excess of political flexibility contributed significantly to the PSA's collapse in the parliamentary election of 1982, when it slipped to under 4 percent of the regional vote and lost all of its five deputies in Madrid. Unlike the Basque and Catalan parties, the PSA has failed to improve its vote count in regional as opposed to national elections. We believe this indicates that much of the regionalist fervor that followed Franco's death is subsiding and that only areas with distinctive linguistic, cultural, and political traditions—in practice, Catalonia and the Basque Country—will support viable regional parties.

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